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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SSM-03
ACDA-12 /089 W
----------121071 131315Z /14
O R 131130Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7601
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2097

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION, APRIL 13, 1300 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 2075 (DTG 121640Z APR 78)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. FIGHTING IS CONTINUING IN AYN AR-
RUMANNAH. BACHIR GEMAYEL BLAMED THE PALESTINIANS FOR "WHAT
HAS HAPPENED IN LEBANON." INTERIOR MINISTER SALMAN CALLED
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THE INITIAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL "MICROSCOPIC." END SUMMARY.

2. AYN AR-RUMANNAH/SHIYAH FIGHTING.

A. THERE WAS HEAVY ARTILLERY, TANK, RIFLE, GRENADE,
MACHINE GUN AND SMALL ARMS FIRE IN THE AYN AR-RUMANNAH AREA
UNTIL ABOUT 0200 HOURS LOCAL ON APRIL 13. THERE WAS ONLY

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SPORADIC SHOOTING AND OCCASIONAL EXPLOSIONS UNTIL ABOUT
10:30 HOURS, WHEN FIRING INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY FOR ABOUT ONE
HOUR. ONE NLP SOURCE SAID IT WAS AFTER PHALANGE HAD EARLIER
FIRED HEAVY WEAPONS AT SOME SYRIAN POSITIONS. FOR THE
NEXT HOUR SMALL ARMS AND MACHINE GUN FIRE CONTINUED, BUT
NOT ARTILLERY FIRE. TWO INDEPENDENT SOURCES AT 11:45 HOURS
REPORTED SYRIANS WERE USING TANKS IN AN APPARENT ATTACK
ON A BUILDING IN AYN AR-RUMANNAH.

B. ON APRIL 12 SEVERAL AYN AR-RUMANNAH BUILDINGS CAUGHT
FIRE AND THE AL HAYAT HOSPITAL WAS HEAVILY SHELLED AS WELL
AS LOCAL NLP AND PHALANGE OFFICES IN THE AREA. ACCORDING
TO THE ADF, 40 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED SO FAR IN THE
FIGHTING.

C. IN A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS
ON APRIL 12, CAMILLE CHAMOUN REGISTERED A STRONG PROTEST
AGAINST THE ARAB FORCES' "INDISCRIMINATE SHELLING OF AYN
AR-RUMANNAH," MOST PAPERS REPORTED. ADF COMMANDER SAMI
KHATIB PUBLICLY DENIED THE SYRIANS WERE FIRING INDISCRI-
MINATELY AND SAID THAT THEY WERE SHOOTING ONLY AT SNIPERS'
NESTS AND OTHER MILITARY TARGETS.

D. EVENING OF APRIL 12, ADF THROUGH SAMI KHATIB INDICATED
SYRIANS WOULD LEAN BACK AND INVITED BACHIR GEMAYEL AND DANY
CHAMOUN TO ATTEND A CEASE-FIRE CONFERENCE AT 10:00 APRIL 13.
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DANY WENT TO MEETING, BUT BACHIR DID NOT, ACCORDING TO
SOURCE CLOSE TO DANY.

3. BACHIR/DANY PRESS CONFERENCE.

BACHIR GEMAYEL AND DANY CHAMOUN HELD A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE
ON APRIL 13. GEMAYEL ACCUSED THE PALESTINIANS OF TRYING
TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE CLASHES WERE SECTARIAN IN
NATURE. HE ADDED: "WE REJECT THAT NOTION. THE PALESTINIANS
ALONE ARE TO BLAME FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN LEBANON."

CHAMOUN TOLD NEWSMEN THAT THE BBC WAS REPORTING THE CLASHES
WERE BETWEEN LEBANESE MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS, WHEN THE
TRUTH WAS THAT THE PALESTINIANS WERE BEHIND THE BATTLE.
"THE BBC ARABIC SERVICE IS BROADCASTING DISTORTED NEWS
BECAUSE THREE-QUARTERS OF ITS EMPLOYEES ARE PALESTINIANS,"
HE SAID.

4. SOUTH LEBANON.

A. INTERIOR MINISTER SALAH SALMAN DECLARED APRIL 12 THAT
ISRAELI TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON HAD BEEN

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"MICROSCOPIC" AND SAID "THIS WITHDRAWAL DID NOT CONFORM TO THE PLAN WE KNOW ABOUT."

B. ADVANCE GUARD OF NEPALESE UNIFIL CONTINGENT, CONSISTING OF 30 MEN, ARRIVED MORNING OF APRIL 12 AT LOD AIRPORT, TEL AVIV. ABOUT 600 ADDITIONAL NEPALESE ARE SCHEDULED TO FOLLOW SHORTLY. PARKER

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